

## **Assembly Bill No. 974**

### **CHAPTER 711**

An act to amend Section 1317.2 of the Health and Safety Code, relating to health facilities.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2013. Filed with  
Secretary of State October 10, 2013.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AB 974, Hall. Patient transfer: nonmedical reasons: notice to contact person or next of kin.

Existing law establishes the State Department of Public Health and sets forth its powers and duties, including, but not limited to, the licensing and regulation of health facilities, as defined. Existing law prohibits the transfer of a person needing emergency services from one hospital to another for any nonmedical reason unless prescribed conditions are met. A knowing and intentional violation of those provisions is a crime.

This bill would, in addition, require that, prior to a transfer of a patient for a nonmedical reason, the hospital ask the patient if there is a preferred contact person to be notified, and make a reasonable attempt to contact that person and alert him or her about the proposed transfer, and, if the patient is not able to respond, require that the hospital make a reasonable effort to ascertain the identity of the preferred contact person or the next of kin and alert him or her about the transfer. The bill would require that the hospital document any attempts to contact a preferred contact person or next of kin in the patient's medical record. Because a knowing and intentional violation of these requirements would be a crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 1317.2 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1317.2. A person needing emergency services and care shall not be transferred from a hospital to another hospital for any nonmedical reason (such as the person's inability to pay for any emergency service or care) unless each of the following conditions are met:

(a) The person is examined and evaluated by a physician and surgeon, including, if necessary, consultation, prior to transfer.

(b) The person has been provided with emergency services and care so that it can be determined, within reasonable medical probability, that the transfer or delay caused by the transfer will not create a medical hazard to the person.

(c) A physician and surgeon at the transferring hospital has notified and has obtained the consent to the transfer by a physician and surgeon at the receiving hospital and confirmation by the receiving hospital that the person meets the hospital's admissions criteria relating to appropriate bed, personnel, and equipment necessary to treat the person.

(d) The transferring hospital provides for appropriate personnel and equipment that a reasonable and prudent physician and surgeon in the same or similar locality exercising ordinary care would use to effect the transfer.

(e) All of the person's pertinent medical records and copies of all the appropriate diagnostic test results that are reasonably available are transferred with the person.

(f) The records transferred with the person include a "Transfer Summary" signed by the transferring physician and surgeon that contains relevant transfer information. The form of the "Transfer Summary" shall, at a minimum, contain the person's name, address, sex, race, age, insurance status, and medical condition; the name and address of the transferring physician and surgeon or emergency department personnel authorizing the transfer; the time and date the person was first presented at the transferring hospital; the name of the physician and surgeon at the receiving hospital consenting to the transfer and the time and date of the consent; the time and date of the transfer; the reason for the transfer; and the declaration of the signor that the signor is assured, within reasonable medical probability, that the transfer creates no medical hazard to the patient. Neither the transferring physician and surgeon nor transferring hospital shall be required to duplicate, in the "Transfer Summary," information contained in medical records transferred with the person.

(g) The transfer conforms with regulations established by the state department. These regulations may prescribe minimum protocols for patient transfers.

(h) The patient shall be asked if there is a preferred contact person to be notified and, prior to the transfer, the hospital shall make a reasonable attempt to contact that person and alert him or her about the proposed transfer, in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 56.1007 of the Civil Code. If the patient is not able to respond, the hospital shall make a reasonable effort to ascertain the identity of the preferred contact person or the next of kin and alert him or her about the transfer, in accordance with subdivision (b) of Section 56.1007 of the Civil Code. The hospital shall document in the patient's medical record any attempts to contact a preferred contact person or next of kin.

(i) This section shall not apply to a transfer of a patient for medical reasons.

(j) This section shall not prohibit the transfer or discharge of a patient when the patient or the patient's representative requests a transfer or discharge and gives informed consent to the transfer or discharge against medical advice.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.